

effective fire fighting techniques and programs here in Maryland. Fire fighting enthusiasts in other states are taking notice of the many fine programs in effect here and are anxious to see similar undertakings launched in their own areas. They know, as do we, that one of the best indicators of a successful fire fighting and fire prevention program is insurance rates. It is only natural, then, that fire fighting enthusiasts in other states seek out the reasons for Maryland's success in the field of fire prevention and protection. It is my hope that we can help them.

It is my hope, also, that the reassuring developments in fire prevention here, will not lull us into complacency. We must remember that more children still lose their lives from fire than from infantile paralysis, diphtheria, whooping cough, measles and scarlet fever combined. During the year 1963, more than 11,800 people lost their lives in fires and more than one billion, seven hundred and sixty million dollars in property was consumed.

Our approach to fire fighting here in Maryland has not been very much different from that of the medical profession in its fight against disease. We not only equip ourselves to cope with the fire when it occurs, but we also do our dead-level best to attack those causes of fires that arise from human error and negligence. In this latter regard, let me say that I was extremely pleased that, at the 1964 session of the Maryland General Assembly, two bills were enacted and signed into law by me that should help us in combatting the dangers of fire and disaster. The first of these created a separate and distinct office for the Fire Marshal. As many of you undoubtedly know, prior to the enactment of this bill, the Insurance Commissioner served in a dual capacity—he was also our Fire Marshal. However, not very long ago, it became apparent to all of us interested in promoting the very best fire fighting program that it was impossible for one man to do both jobs effectively. The demands placed upon the Insurance Commissioner's office as a result of the complexities of regulating the insurance industry caused less emphasis to be placed on the duties of the Fire Marshal. The creation of a separate office for the Fire Marshal will now permit the development of a concentrated program of fire prevention and safety coordinated by that office in conjunction with other programs underway throughout the State.

The second law enacted at the 1964 session of the General Assembly is known generally as the Good Samaritan Act. It relieves fire departments of responsibility when their men perform a charitable act to the best of their knowledge. It is my belief that by removing the Sword of Damocles from above the heads of firemen and ambulance crews,